Deputy President: The House will take up the discussion of resolutions.—

Resolutions—*(cont.)*

8. Government control of the marketing of coir in the State—*(cont.)*

Mr. V. K. Bhaskara Menon *(Cranganur):* Sir, I have very great pleasure in supporting the resolution moved by my friend Mr. Nambiar. It is extremely gratifying to find that there is unanimity of opinion as to the necessity for taking urgent steps in furtherance of the aims contained in the resolution. The difference of opinion after the statement of the Hon'ble Minister seems to be as to the wisdom of the steps decided upon by the Hon'ble Minister. I have heard the national opinion voiced from Pazhayannur to Kanyannur and the international opinion voiced forth by the Hon'ble Member for Mattancheri. To my limited understanding the objection seems to be two-fold; firstly that any Government undertaking in the form of running a business is doomed to failure as is evidenced by the sorry story of the Potteries and the Tanneries and secondly there is the still more weighty reason that whatever might be the steadying influence on the price by the momentum of Governmental action the result to the producer or to the actual worker will be nothing. Sir, the first objection seems to be based on a deliberate misconception of the scheme of the hon'ble member. The Hon'ble Minister has been stating that the object of the Central Depot is to be a central focussing point for the various depots that may be started all over the country which latter will with the organisation of co-operative Societies be entrusted to their management. That highly acute member for Pazhayannur wanted the co-operative societies to be started first and even if some money is lost on the same, it may be regarded as money well-spent. I fail to see the logic. If money spent for attempting to create co-operative societies is well spent then I fail to see on the other hand how money spent to inspire co-perative societies can be regarded as ill-spent. May I ask the hon'ble member what his suggestions are for the proper spending of the money for the organisation of co-operative societies. Is it by organising societies and giving them grants ? If so I cannot understand what different idea the Hon'ble Minister has, for according to him, in localities where coir production is great, depots are to be opened and people are to be taught at the same time the possibilities of obtaining a fair price for their produce, if they are able to undertake the running of the Depots themselves. Sir, is this tackling the

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problem from the wrong end ? I must emphatically contend that it is not. As it is, the mere possibility of getting a higher price is not sufficient to induce people to join together but the possibility must be realised as an actual reality before the people venture on unknown grounds. In this connection I am constrained to refer to certain authoritative assertions of the omniscient Hon'ble Member for Kanayannur Ezhuvas. He has stated that there are no small producers of coir yarn, to the best of his information. If an occasional visit to certain parts of his constituency is made, even the Feuhrer from his high pedestal of declamatory superiority can realise that there are more small producers than big capitalists, and that a Government Depot at Champakkara will mean a fair price for innumerable families whom he is supposed to represent. Sir, I too represent a constituency where coir is extensively manufactured and I must confess that I have a bit of knowledge of this industry though not to that extent possessed by my hon'ble friend the member for Pazhayannur. With the limited knowledge that I have, I am for accepting the scheme proposed by the Hon'ble Minister. The other argument that no worker in the industry will get a fair price even if the Commission middlemen are eliminated is contrary to all economic doctrines and facts and might possibly be the result of projecting one's own image into others. That with a better price for his product, the producer will and does pay a better price to the worker is an economic truism that can only be disputed by the supreme wisdom of the Hon'ble Member for Pazhayannnr and Kanayannur Ezhuvas.

Sir, I am not an admirer of the egg-laying and goat-farming schemes of the Hon'ble Minister; but this scheme of his, undertaken with intense anxiety and after arduous consideration, so assented and supported by the advice of persons who are in the business and who are not supposed to know everything about everything, should find favour and support in this House in spite of the gloomy prediction of the Holy Trinity who have constituted themselves sole custodian of the financial integrity of the State and must be proceeded with if any relief is to be given to the large section of the workers in the littoral areas once again. I have very great pleasure in supporting this resolution.

Mr. V. N. Damodaran Nambiar *(Trippunittura)*: Mr. President, Sir, I do not think it necessary to make any lengthy reply to the arguments advanced. I am very thankful to this House for the lively discussion we had in connection with this resolution of mine. With regard to the proposal of the Hon'ble Minister, of starting a Central Organisation for the disposal of coir yarn, I think it conforms to the recommendations embodied in this Resolution.

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I would only request him to make that organisation work on co-operative lines as far as possible because it is only then that the maximum advantage can be gained. I would also request the Hon'ble Minister not to stop with this organisation of the Central Depot. It is also essential, if the whole scheme should successfully work that a net work of societies based on co-operative lines should be established throughout the whole State. Of course I do realise the difficulties pointed out by the Hon'ble Minister in taking the initiative in starting these societies. Those difficulties can, I think, be solved easily if the Officers of the Co-operative Department do really take an interest in the matter, tour about the whole State, come in contact with people and do some real work in this line. In this connection I would only invite the Hon'ble Minister's attention to the kind of work that is being done in a few countries elsewhere. I shall not be long but I shall only refer to a passage from a well-known book on Rural Reconstruction which shows how this kind of work was undertaken by the Government in America and what the result they have been able to achieve on account of the initiative taken by the Government is. There the Government appointed several people, I think the number will come to about 2,000 as county agents directly under the supervision of the Government Agricultural Department. The passage I am going to read gives a catalogue of the achievements of these county agents who work directly under this Department of the Government.

"As for results, there are large figures to show to what extent county agents—who appear to have displayed considerable zeal as well as judgment—have been successful in cultivating the ground allotted to them. Still confining myself to the United States they had in 1918 paid more than half a million farm visits, directly reaching 3,05,489 farmers which shows what an important part of their work, such private visiting is held to stand for. The average number of such visits per county agent was 435. In addition there has been more than a million and a quarter of farmers coming to consult agents on their receiving days, that is, an average of 1,108 per agent, which marks an increase on the figure for the preceding year of 238, when that figure in itself represented an increase of 223 on the preceding year 1916. The agents collectively had contributed 86,565 articles dealing with some agricultural subject or other to the Farm Bureau News. They had written 1,636, 512 letters to individual farmers, that is, an average of 1,419 per agent. That does not include 6,737,971 circular letters, nor yet 100,150 questionnaires. The agents assisted in conducting 2,711 extension schools and farmers' institutions at which the attendance amounted to

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348,751. They conducted 1,803 observation parties representing 82,094 people. They started boys' and girls' clubs, co-operative societies, irrigation and drainage schemes. I have not these figures for 1918 but in 1916, when things were done on a very much reduced scale, there were as many as 1,188 drainage systems planned by agents, applying to 374, 916 acres; 223 irrigation systems, applying to 162,474 acres; 11,163 analyses made for soil acidity; and 301 local sources of lime developed. There were selections of seed made on 63,813 farms and 1,268,237 acres planted with selected seed. There were moreover 3,215 farm survey records taken, 12,841 farmers instructed to keep accounts; 12,841 (co-operative) buying and selling organisations formed. The agents had further more conducted 34,613 demonstrations involving 1,084,596 acres. Nearly 140,000 head of live stock formed part of definite demonstration herds, either in disease treatment, stock feeding or otherwise. In connection with these demonstrations, 13,017 meetings were held, attended by 401,819 persons. The saving to farmers, as a direct result of the demnstrations (confined to the demonstration herds and demonstration areas alone), was estimated to amount to 4,779,079 dollars."

The catalogue of achievements goes in this way "So much for the official catalogue of services rendered....."

I read this passage just to show what the Government can do in this matter and what the Government all over the world have done in this matter by taking the initiative themselves. I have seen that spirit of co-operation among the rural public especially among those who are illiterates. I think if the Minister wants really to improve the tone of this Department he must do something immediately in this direction. Of course it may not be possible if the officers concerned sit at olympic heights and issue circulars to the people under them. They should come into direct contact with the rural folk, visit families and give them timely instructions. I do not think it will be very difficult especially for Government Officials of some States approaching people face to face to organise a few societies and help in the proper working of those societies. I take it that the Government have accepted my resolution. Therefore I only request the Government to try to form such societies immediately so that the whole scheme may work properly and successfully.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I do not wish to take more than one or two minutes. I express my thanks for the various constructive criticisms offered on this resolution. I have understood the mind of the House and in spite of

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some differences of opinion as to the method, the best attempts will be made and as far as possible at the beginning, at any rate, we will try to institute co-operative societies. But in places where that is not possible, the other method also will be adopted as an experimental measure. Later on when it develops we will hand it over to the co-operative societies. In any case before I proceed further I wish to consult the mover of this resolution and after consultation I shall do my best to usher this industrial attempt at the very near future. I have nothing more to add except to express my thanks for the various constructive criticisms and advice offered by various members of this House. I think Mr. Bhaskara Menon has made a small mistake. There was no opposition in the sense of opposition but only criticisms pointing out the dangers of following a certain course. There were no hostile critics but they were suggesting certain dangers. If I proceed on certain lines, I shall bear in mind those points and try to do my best in the matter. The resolution is accepted.

Resolution accepted by Government

Mr. T. V. Subramania Ayyar *(Nemmara):* I move that the House be adjourned.

Mr. T. K. Nayar *(Pazhayannur):* I second it.

Motion put and carried

The House rose for the day at 4 p.m.

C. J. MATHEW
Secretary to the Council

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